

7 CIA Subcommittee

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## Obligation of New CIA Overseers

With the admittance of three new participants to the Senate watchdog committee on activities of the Central Intelligence Agency, a long and disruptive hassle over supervision of the agency has apparently been settled.

Last year, Sens. William Fulbright (D-Ark.) and Eugene McCarthy (D-Minn.) led a fight to have members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, of which Fulbright is chairman, admitted to the special subcommittee which oversees the super-secret activities of the CIA.

They argued that the CIA, as an arm of government with extensive overseas operations, clearly is involved in the conduct—and possibly even the making—of U.S. foreign policy.

Thus, in their view, the Foreign Relations Committee deserved a full voice in the special CIA oversight committee, which has always been composed solely of men who sit on the armed services and appropriations committees.

Sen. Richard Russell (D-Ga.), who heads the watchdog committee, declined to enlarge its membership on grounds that the existing arrangement had proved effective — and the more people were

brought into the secret briefings, the more chance of a security leak.

There was also an awareness that Fulbright is a vociferous critic of CIA operations, and a suspicion that he was interested mainly in curbing its powers.

The issue came to a vote in the Senate last July, and Russell won a clear victory.

However, the Georgian clearly did not relish fighting the battle all over again this year. As a result, what appears to be a sensible arrangement has been worked out.

Fulbright and two highly respected colleagues — Senate Majority leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) and Sen. Bourke B. Hickenlooper (R-Ia.)—have been invited to participate fully in activities of the watchdog committee.

CIA Director Richard Helms gave the first top secret briefing to the enlarged group Monday.

The Russell committee, and its counterpart on the House side, have enviable records of handling highly secret information without succumbing to the temptation to make political or factional use of it.

It is now up to the three new members to serve in the same buttoned-lip spirit.